

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE BILL ANALYSIS

AMENDMENT DATE: June 29, 2011
POSITION: Neutral

BILL NUMBER: SB 578
AUTHOR: G. Negrete McLeod

BILL SUMMARY: Pupils in Foster Care: Course Credit

This bill would require school districts and county offices of education to accept full or partial credit taken by students in foster care for coursework completed at their prior school, and apply that credit to the equivalent subject matter courses at the new school of attendance. The bill would also prohibit school districts and county offices of education from requiring foster care students to retake courses or portions of courses for which full or partial credit has already been granted.

FISCAL SUMMARY

At a local level, this bill has the potential to result in increased staffing costs. Specifically, local staff may have to spend additional time trying to match up full or partial credit taken for particular courses at a prior school, with the equivalent subject matter coursework at the new school. Given that schools are already required to grant full or partial credit to foster care students for coursework completed at the prior school of attendance, we do not believe that the additional work of matching up coursework with equivalent subject matter would substantially increase local costs. And from a statewide perspective, by prohibiting schools from requiring foster care students to retake all or portions of coursework for which full or partial credit has been granted, this bill may in fact eliminate duplicative coursework and thereby eliminate unnecessary average daily attendance costs for both the local school district and the state. As a result, while this bill may create some amount of state reimbursable mandated costs, these costs would be more than offset by savings from reducing duplicative coursework.

COMMENTS

The Department of Finance is neutral on this bill for the following reasons:

- Requiring schools to grant full or partial credit towards equivalent subject matter coursework, while prohibiting them from requiring foster care students to retake potentially duplicative coursework for which credit has already been granted, will help eliminate disruptions in the matriculation process that cause foster care students to fall behind their peers in meeting graduation requirements, or in some cases, drop out of school.
- By prohibiting schools from requiring potentially duplicative coursework for transferring foster care students, this bill may help eliminate unnecessary average daily attendance costs for both the local school district and the state.

The author indicates that while current law requires schools to accept full or partial credit earned by foster care students at their prior school of attendance, schools do not necessarily apply that credit towards the equivalent subject matter coursework at their new school of attendance. Instead, the author indicates that schools often apply this credit toward elective coursework, and may still require these foster care students to retake all or portions of the equivalent coursework at the new school of attendance. As a result of current practice, the author believes it is necessary to require credit to be applied specifically to equivalent subject matter at the new school of attendance, and prevent schools from requiring foster care students from

Analyst/Principal (0340) T. Todd	Date	Program Budget Manager Nick Schweizer	Date
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Department Deputy Director	Date
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Governor's Office:	By:	Date:	Position Approved _____
			Position Disapproved _____

BILL ANALYSIS	Form DF-43 (Rev 03/95 Buff)
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retaking coursework for which full or partial credit has already been granted. The author believes that changing these practices through the statutory clarifications offered in this bill will help prevent foster care students from falling behind their peers in matriculating towards graduation.

Under current law, school districts and county offices of education are required to exempt foster care students from any additional school-specific course requirements beyond those required for graduation, if the foster care student transfers to the school from another district or from another high school within the district during the 11th or 12th grade, unless the school determines that the student would have sufficient time to complete that coursework prior to graduation. Current law also requires school districts and county offices of education to accept full or partial coursework completed by students at any public school, juvenile court school, or non-public non-sectarian school or agency.

Code/Department Agency or Revenue Type	SO	(Fiscal Impact by Fiscal Year)							
	LA	(Dollars in Thousands)							
	CO	PROP							Fund
	RV	98	FC	2011-2012	FC	2012-2013	FC	2013-2014	Code
6110/Dept of Educ	LA	Yes	-----	See Fiscal Summary				-----	0001